

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1-14 (Cancelled)

15. (Previously presented) A method for melting and refining of a glass melt in a channel having an open top, comprising:

positioning a first inductive heating coil with respect to the channel so that said open top remains open; and

activating said first inductive heating coil so that the glass melt flows in a horizontal direction.

16. (Previously presented) The method as in claim 15, further comprising positioning a second inductive heating coil with respect to the channel so that said open top remains open, said second inductive heating coil being spaced from said first inductive heating coil.

17. (Previously presented) The method as in claim 16, further comprising positioning an alternate heating source with respect to the channel in said open top between said first and second inductive heating coils.

18. (Previously presented) The method as in claim 17, wherein said alternate heating source is an electrical heating unit.

19. (Previously presented) The method as in claim 17, wherein said alternate heating source is a burner heating unit.

20. (Previously presented) The method as in claim 15, further comprising positioning a burner heating unit with respect to the channel in said open top.

21. (Previously presented) The method as in claim 20, wherein said burner heating unit has a gas/air or gas/oxygen ratio that produces a reducing atmosphere.

22. (Currently amended) A method for melting and refining of a glass melt, comprising:

disposing the glass melt in a skull channel with an open top, said skull channel being configured for continuous horizontal flow of the glass melt; and

heating the glass melt with a first inductive heating coil, wherein said first inductive heating coil is arranged about said skull channel so that said open top is free of said first inductive heating coil.

23. (Previously presented) The method as in claim 22, further comprising heating the glass melt with a second inductive heating coil, said second inductive heating coil being arranged about said skull channel so that said open top is free of said second inductive heating coil.

24. (Previously presented) The method as in claim 23, further comprising heating the melt with an alternate heating source, said alternate heating source being positioned in said open top between said first and second inductive heating coils.

25. (Currently amended) The method as in claim ~~23~~24, wherein said alternate heating source is an electrical heating unit or burner heating unit.

26. (New) A method for melting and refining of a glass melt, comprising:

disposing the glass melt in a skull channel with an open top and open ends, said skull channel being configured for horizontal flow of the glass melt; and

activating said first inductive heating coil so that the glass melt flows in a horizontal direction.

27. (New) The method as in claim 22, wherein said skull channel has a metal-cooled cage having a plurality of water-cooled pipes being surrounded by solidified melt.